

Revolutionary Constitutions: The History, Economocracy, and Cycle of Money in the Formation of Greek Independence

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Abstract

This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the three revolutionary constitutions of Greece: Epidauros (1822), Astros (1823), and Troizina (1827). The study explores the influence of Enlightenment ideas and foreign constitutions on these foundational documents, highlighting their role in shaping the political, social, and legal framework of the newly established Greek state. Key differences in legislative procedures, emphasis on individual versus civil rights, and the evolution from provisional governance to a more structured state are examined. The paper also considers the potential application of economocracy and the cycle of money as innovative economic tools in the context of 19th-century Greece, illustrating how these concepts could have addressed the economic challenges of the era.

Keywords: revolutionary constitutions, Epidauros, Astros, Troizina, Greek independence, enlightenment, economocracy, cycle of money, constitutional history.

1. Introduction

The revolutionary regiments were those of Epidauros, Astros, and Troizina. The Constitution of Epidauros in 1822, the Constitution of Astros in 1823, and the Constitution of Troizina in 1827. It is worth mentioning that the Constitutions in question did not take place over a long period. The reasons are that it seems that the state of war prevented their implementation and that the Constitution of Kapodistrias, in 1827, was introduced. The Enlightenment influenced the revolutionary Constitutions since its ideas seem to run through their provisions. There was an orientation that provided for the safeguarding of fundamental rights. In addition, there were provisions for the organization of state power. Since the Enlightenment had a key influence on the revolutionary constitutions, it was to be expected that they would be influenced by foreign constitutions that were based on the Enlightenment idea.

Afterward, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789 and the subsequent French Constitutions, namely those of 1791, 1793, and 1795, seem to have influenced the provisions of the Revolutionary Constitutions. Also, the American Constitution, of 1787, had a substantial influence on the Greek Constitutions, which was to be expected, as the United States Constitution itself was influenced by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. That is, the organization of the executive branch was one of the first issues emphasized in

the new Constitution (Βλαχόπουλος, 2022). In the following sections, the revolutionary Constitutions are analyzed, and a comparative dimension is given to them.

2. The Constitution of Epidaurus

The Constitution of Epidaurus took place on 20 December 1821, and in this way, the Constitution of 1 January 1822 was adopted by the First National Assembly. The Constitution of Epidaurus was also called the Provisional Constitution of Greece (Χατζής, 2019). The normative scope of this Constitution, although influenced by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, is nevertheless not characterized by features of simple copying and transferring provisions from outside constitutional provisions (Μουρτοπάλλας, 2023). The revolutionary constitution in question set out how national power was to be organized through the Administration, namely the Executive and the Parliamentary bodies. It appears that both houses are equal in passing laws. Both the parliamentary needs ratification of its decisions by the executive and the executive needs ratification of its decisions by the parliamentary in the process of law making. After all, there is one parliament and the executive has two bodies, the executive and the parliament, each of which needs the cooperation of the other. Thus, the representative system of the Constitution of Epidaurus was established. The parliamentary body consisted of elected persons, from various parts of Greece, appointed according to the electoral law. Those who elected the parliamentary body were the elders. The elders were the electors of each district and could elect one deputy per province. The qualifications for eligibility were to be a native or to reside within the province in which the candidate sought election (Σύνταγμα, 2024).

The executive consisted of five persons, who were not members of the parliament, through an assembly, where the officials of the administration and the ministers were elected. (Σβώλος, 1998). The term of office was short, i.e., one year. Independence of functions was achieved through the aforementioned procedure, where members of the parliamentary and members of the executive body came from different electoral procedures. It is worth noting that, nevertheless, the parliamentary and executive bodies needed to work together when passing a law (Σύνταγμα, 1822). It should also be noted that it provided for a judiciary, i.e. the tripartite separation of powers existed.

Social contracts safeguard the values of natural law, namely freedom and property. This seems to be emphasized in the first Greek Constitution of the Revolution. The Constitution of Epidaurus explicitly provides for security and property in its provisions. Liberty and property are concepts fundamental to the safeguarding of the natural rights of man. While egalitarianism was prominent in the first revolutionary constitution.

3. The Constitution of Astros

The Constitution of Astros was submitted on 29 March 1823, at the Second National Assembly of Astros. The National Assembly largely retained the Constitution of Epidaurus and made a few amendments to it. Afterward, due to the irreversibility of the original Constitution's provisions, the Constitution of Epidaurus was called the Law of Epidaurus. The changes that were made, however, concerned the executive power, namely the right of veto in the legislative process. As predicted, the parliamentary body and the executive body made decisions by mutual agreement on the laws. What was achieved by the Law of Epidaurus is that it changed the veto from an interruptible to a suspensive veto. Whenever, the suspensive nature of the executive's non-agreement, in any case, led to the ratification of laws, in that it was not a mere postponement to the future for the ratification of a law, but also its ratification. The reason is that if there was a disagreement between the parliament and the executive, then after a second disagreement two months were allowed to elapse. If there is also a disagreement on the third bill, the result is that

the position of the parliamentary body, which is the proposer, prevails. So, a major difference between the Constitution of Epidaurus and the Law of Epidaurus is that the parliamentary body was strengthened during the legislative process. That is, the legislative power of the executive was weakened, and thus the confusion of powers between the functions of the Constitution (Σύνταγμα, 1822).

It should be noted that the number of members of the executive remained at five. That is, the executive is composed of the same number of persons both in the Constitution of Epidaurus and in the Law of Epidaurus. As regards the number of members of the parliamentary body, in both revolutionary constitutions the number of members was determined by the provisions of each law (Σβώλος, 1998).

Subsequently, the natural rights of the social contract, namely property and freedom, were extended beyond the Greeks to foreigners. He also made explicit reference to freedom in combination with slavery, which existed at the time in question (Σύνταγμα, 1823). The explicit reference to isonomy remained. In other words, all the essential characteristics of a social contract were inherent in the provisions. Something which was also found in the Constitution of Epidaurus. The Law of Epidaurus was the connecting link between the other two Constitutions of the revolutionary period since it has elements from both Constitutions (of Epidaurus and Troizina), such as the one Parliament, with its two bodies, the parliamentary and the executive (as well as the judicial) and the changes it brought about in the veto of the executive (later the unicameral government).

4. The Constitution of Troizina

The Constitution of Troizina was adopted in May 1827 by the National Assembly of Troizina, i.e., the Third National Assembly (Σύνταγμα, 1827). This revolutionary Constitution strengthened one of the two bodies, in this case strengthening the legislative power, and reducing the diffusion of powers. In other words, the five members provided for the executive ceased to exist, and their place was taken by a single person, thus paving the way for government, from Kapodistrias (Παυλόπουλος, 2023).

There is an explicit reference for the first time to revolutionary constitutions since there is a reference to popular sovereignty since sovereignty derives from the people and is exercised in favor of the people. While the reference to egalitarianism remained.

The number of members of the Parliament continues to be determined by law in the case of the Troizina Constitution. The difference, however, is in the term of office of the members of parliament, which is no longer a single term, but a three-year term (Σβώλος, 1998).

The legislative procedure differs from that of the Constitution of Epidaurus and remains similar to that of the Law of Epidaurus. Namely, there is the veto procedure by the executive, in this case, the Governor. Otherwise, the suspensive effect of the veto, of the Law of Epidaurus, continues to exist over the interruptive effect of it, which existed in the provisional Constitution (Σβώλος, 1998; Σύνταγμα, 1823). What is changed concerning the Law of Epidaurus is that in the Constitution of Troizina, a clear period is given for the ratification of a law, namely fifteen days. But in case this is not accepted, it is returned within fifteen days for rewriting and resubmission. If after the changes again it is not accepted by the Government, then within another fifteen days it is returned. Ultimately, it is resubmitted to the Government, where it now becomes the law of the land. In the case of the Law of Epidaurus, the only clear time frame is that of the two-month return to the last and third submission of the law in question, from the Parliament to the Executive.

One difference between the revolutionary constitutions is the priority that the Constitution of Epidaurus and the Law of Epidaurus give to civil rights, without this meaning that they do not also focus on individual rights, especially the Law of Epidaurus. On the contrary, the Constitution of Troizina emphasizes individual rights. This stems from the emphasis that the constitutional (or constitutionalist, depending on one's perspective) legislator places on the first provisions of the Constitution.

For example, in the Constitution of Epidaurus, the legislator on the general rights of the inhabitants of the territory of Greece focuses on the safeguarding of the political rights of Greeks (Σύνταγμα, 1822). The same is done in the Law of Epidaurus (Σύνταγμα, 1823). In both Constitutions, the reference to this matter is made in paragraph b. of both Constitutions. In contrast to the Constitution of Troizina, where the first reference to rights is made in par. 5 thereof and touches on the rights of the social contract, i.e. natural rights, thus the individual rights of man, as recorded both in the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, 1789 (Σύνταγμα, 1827).

In any case, the Administration was of prominent importance in the formation of the Greek state and this is highlighted by the constitutional (or constitutional legislator's, depending on his approach) commitment to the reference to the Administration in the provisions of the revolutionary Constitutions. This shows the need to organize a newly established state after a long occupation of a state for centuries. Section C of the Constitution of Epidaurus is entitled "On the Formation of the Administration" (Σύνταγμα, 1822), as is Section C of the Law of Epidaurus, which bears the same title, without variation. Chapter E of the Constitution of Troizina is entitled "On the Constitution of the Greek State." It appears that there is now a transition from the concept of administration to a constituted and well-established state structure, that of the polity (Μουρτοπάλλας, 2023; Μπάρκουλα, 2008; Σύνταγμα, 1822, 1823, 1827, 2024).

5. Hypothesis if economocracy and the theory of cycle of money had applied to the Greek case

In the early 19th century, Greece embarked on a path of nation-building amidst the backdrop of the Greek War of Independence. The revolutionary constitutions of Epidaurus (1822), Astros (1823), and Troizina (1827) were foundational in shaping the nascent Greek state's political and legal framework. These constitutions were heavily influenced by Enlightenment principles and the revolutionary ideas circulating in Europe and America at the time. They established fundamental rights, the separation of powers, and a framework for governance that emphasized both collective and individual rights (Revolutionary Constitution).

Applying the principles of economocracy and the cycle of money to the newly established Greek state in 1830 could have significant implications (Challoumis, 2018, 2019, 2024d, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2021b, 2022a, 2023d, 2023b, 2023e, 2023a, 2023c, 2023f). Economocracy, a system where economic decisions are made democratically by the populace, aligns well with the participatory ideals embedded in the revolutionary constitutions (Challoumis, 2021a). By ensuring that economic policies reflect the collective will, economocracy could enhance economic stability and social equity, fostering a more inclusive and prosperous society. The concept of the cycle of money, which emphasizes the continuous and balanced flow of money within the economy, could address economic disparities and stimulate growth. In the context of post-independence Greece, this would mean developing mechanisms to ensure that wealth circulates efficiently throughout the economy, reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development. The provisional constitutions laid a strong foundation for a democratic governance system in Greece. Integrating economocracy into this framework would involve enhancing the role of citizens in economic policymaking, perhaps through referenda or participatory budgeting processes. This approach would ensure that economic decisions are aligned with the needs and

aspirations of the population, fostering a more resilient and responsive economic system (Revolutionary Constitution).

The use of non-productive money can reduce the public debt without burdening citizens with extra interest. This offers a viable solution for financing public programs and projects, according to the work “Economocracy versus Capitalism” (Challoumis, 2022b). Moreover, the revolutionary emphasis on natural rights such as liberty and property could be expanded to include economic rights, ensuring that all citizens have equitable access to economic resources and opportunities. This integration would not only preserve the democratic ideals of the revolutionary period but also adapt them to meet contemporary economic challenges. The revolutionary constitutions of Greece were pivotal in establishing a democratic and legal framework for the new state. By integrating the principles of economocracy and the cycle of money, modern Greece could build on this legacy to create a more equitable and sustainable economy. This fusion of historical constitutional principles with contemporary economic theories offers a pathway to a more inclusive and prosperous future for Greece.

6. Conclusions

The first two revolutionary Constitutions are called the provisional constitutions of Greece, as they took place in 1822 and 1823, i.e., within a very short period after the revolution. A notable difference between them and the Constitution of Troizina is that it is titled “The Political Constitution of Greece.” In other words, the third revolutionary Constitution seems to have crystallized the normative framework of the provisions and the historical events of the time.

Both the Constitution of Troizina and its predecessor, the Law of Epidaurus, make explicit reference to many individual rights, i.e., they seem to acquire a more liberal dimension since they respect the rights of political philosophy, especially natural law. In any case, the revolutionary constitutions seem to be influenced by the historical dimensions of their time, as the revolution was a period of establishment of the Greek state, both in terms of the formation of its boundaries and its social, political, and legal identity.

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